

Welcome to Wells & Mendip Museum's newsletter with information about exhibitions, talks, events and developments at the Museum. If you would like to receive a copy by e-mail please contact admin@wellsmuseum.org.uk

Opening hours: Monday – Saturday 10am – 4pm. Closed Sundays.

SMALL ART EXHIBITIONS IN MEETING ROOM

The Museum's Meeting Room has been hosting a regularly changing programme of Art exhibitions since the summer of 2016, during which many individuals, and some groups, have embraced this novel opportunity to see a body of their own work displayed in a public space, overlooking the Cathedral Green.

Showing work here is an attractive proposition, there being no charge to take part. Requirements are that all work must be able to use the hanging system in situ, and available for purchase, at which time all transactions will be handled by the Museum Shop, with 30% of the selling price directed toward the running of the Museum.

The Museum would like to encourage more people to take part in the programme, so if you are making something that can be displayed on a wall, why not get in touch.

Now extended to 4 March 2019 - an Art Exhibition by Derek Smart



Derek's introduction to the world of art was at the age of 8 years old, sitting in the school classroom applying watercolours to paper. At the age of 12 he was then introduced to technical drawing and his love of sketching grew, and he was often to be found with a notebook and pencil in his hand – but never a paintbrush.

At the age of 64, his wife, Linda, put a paint brush in his hand for the first time with the words "Trust" and "Believe" and presented him with a set of watercolour paints. A whole new world of colour opened before him and art became his passion. Drawn to nature and his love of animals, but best of all his won imagination, brought about a desire to capture the essence of the living world. **Museum entry fees apply**

Proceeds from the sale of his work will be donated to The Children's Hospice South West.

DRINKING FROM GLASS: MUSEUM LIBRARY EXHIBITION

The Library exhibition, linked to the Museum's permanent display, is open until April

A little-known treasure of Wells & Mendip Museum is a collection of drinking glasses dating back to the reign of William III. The bulk of the collection was bequeathed to the Museum by Astrid Klemz. Displayed in one of the first-floor galleries, the collection



contains virtually perfect examples of the stylish glasses used in the 18th and early 19th centuries

Among intriguing examples is an early 18th-century ale –glass of surprisingly small dimensions – perhaps because ale in those days was much stronger stuff. And when in the 1740s a tax was levied on glass according to weight, the thick ‘baluster’ stems of the early 1700s gave way to slimmer, decorative stems variously called ‘air-twist’ or ‘cotton-twist’.

Something more substantial was needed in the 1780s, when glasses were given heavier bases to avoid their being broken when slammed down on the table after drinking a toast. Toast-

masters were liable to get ‘tiddly’, and in the display is a glass with a specially thickened bowl designed to hold only a token quantity of liquor.

Besides the bequest to the Museum of these historic drinking-glasses, the Museum Library received more than two dozen books on glass and glass-making. These books were added to the Library’s Arts and Crafts section in 2013. Those on display include the collection of the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, a large volume entitled *Investing in Georgian Glass* and Laurence Whistler’s *Scenes and Sights in Glass*.

COLLECTIONS – RETROSPECTIVE DOCUMENTATION

by David Walker, Honorary Curator

We are four years into a five-year programme to update our digital records with the current locations of the objects we hold and reconcile information on the collections with the artefacts and specimens themselves. This is a wonderful opportunity to see some items for the first time (we have nearly 28,000 records of objects and groups of objects), and to catch up with ‘old friends’ that we haven’t seen for a while. In this category are a couple of medieval roof slates with musical notation scratched onto them. They came from the site of the Manor House of the Deans of Wells at Wedmore, excavated by the Reverend Hervey of Wedmore and given to the museum in 1898. I’ve often wondered what the notes are, just a choral exercise, or part of a composition?



NEWS FROM WELLS CITY ARCHIVES

Wake Up Wells! 26th January 2019 – This community celebration day is “designed to showcase all that is great about Wells” – and that includes the City Archives! So we’ll be taking part. We’ll have a table in Wells Cathedral and will be giving people an opportunity to find out what the Archives is, what it does and where it’s based.



Come along and find out about the medieval elephant in the Archives!

Open again to visitors – After the December closure for stocktaking, the City Archives is now open again to visitors and enquiries. Please could those wishing to visit make an appointment with Julia on archives@wellsmuseum.org.uk.

Archives Catalogue – We’re still working hard at

the Archives Catalogue. We've now got to the stage of adding all the bound volumes to the catalogue of boxes.

Sad news – Julia is very sad to report that our lovely Archives volunteer Janet James has died. She was a valued member of the Box Listing Group and also contributed hugely to displays for Heritage Open Day. Using her wonderful presentational skills, she created beautiful and fascinating historical displays about bishops of Wells and artists' views of the city. We shall miss her a lot.

"FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM" MEMBERSHIP

As well as our normal yearly membership, priced at just £10 for an individual and £15 for a family, which allows unlimited visits to the Museum and our exhibitions, and also gives a 10% discount on all of our shop products for a full 12 months, we are very pleased to have launched an option to purchase a **Lifetime Pass**, which will provide unlimited access to the Museum and its exhibitions for years to come, at a one-off cost of £100 for an individual and £150 for a family.

Applications for this pass will be available on our new application form. If you have recently purchased or renewed your membership and would like to exchange it for a lifetime pass, please contact the Museum Manager admin@wellsmuseum.org.uk to discuss.

WELLS HERITAGE PARTNERSHIP SCHEME

A Wells Heritage Pass has been launched between [Bishop's Palace & Gardens, Wells Cathedral](#) and [Wells & Mendip Museum](#) to offer residents and visitors the chance to enjoy unlimited access to these three historically significant sites all year round with one annual pass. The costs for this pass are –

Individual pass - £40

Joint pass - £69

Family pass - £78 (2 adults and 2 children)

A one parent family pass - £55

Cardholders will also get a 10% discount on shop purchases

Currently, these passes may only be purchased from the Cathedral or the Bishop's Palace, but they will hopefully also be available from the Museum later this year.

Funds raised from the Wells Heritage Pass will be invested in the conservation of these significant heritage landmarks and will ensure that the doors of these sites are kept open to the public now and for future generations.

Please Note: This does not replace our normal Friend of Wells Museum membership, which we will continue to run.

FINDS IDENTIFICATION DAY

Thursday 17 January 11am – 2pm

Laura Burnett, the Finds Liaison Officer for Somerset County Council, will be available to identify your finds from digging your garden or while walking your dog.

No charge or booking necessary



WAKE UP WELLS - Saturday 26 January

As part of the "Wake Up Wells" Community Day, the Museum will be having an information stall in the Cathedral where you will be able to find out more about our collections, events, exhibitions and volunteering opportunities.

Also on **Saturday 26th January**, as part of the "Wake Up Wells" Community Day, in our **Lecture Hall**, we will be hosting a day of free art workshops for the family with artist Edwina Bridgeman and Somerset Art Works, where you will be able to create creatures, figures and landscape to populate a textile island.

And in our **Meeting Room**, there will be a number of talks/workshops :-

10am – 10.45am	City of Wells Dementia Action Alliance
11am – 11.45am	Wells Civic Society
12pm – 12.45pm	Somerset Convergence
2pm – 2.45pm	City of Wells Dementia Action Alliance

Bookings for all talks and events can be made through Eventbrite (including a lantern making workshop in the run up to the event) www.bit.ly/makealantern

For more information on the event, please go to www.yourwells.com/wake-up-wells

OTHER MUSEUM EVENTS

MUSIC at the MUSEUM will be presenting **one free concert** each month in January, February & March with soloists Sarah Poole (soprano) and David Heyes (double bass).

The concerts will feature new, exciting, evocative and accessible music from around "Republic) alongside unaccompanied Somerset folksongs.

Saturday 12 January 2019 at 12.00 - Music by Hans Fryba, David Heyes, Katrien Bos, Teppo Hauta-aho, John Alexander & Bernard Salles & Michael Head

Friday 25 January at 7pm – "Massive collisions in the solar system" by Dr. Paul Roche

"Wherever we look in the solar system there is evidence of the key role that impacts have played in shaping the planets, and possibly the evolution of life itself. Why does Venus rotate "backwards", and Uranus orbit the Sun "lying on its side"? What killed the dinosaurs, and should we be worried about going the same way?

Astronomers regularly discover huge lumps of rock and ice hurtling past the Earth, and if some of them were to actually hit us, the effects could be terrifying, with dramatic consequences for all life on Earth. Recent near misses, and the huge airburst explosion over Chelyabinsk, Russia, in February 2013, make this a very topical issue." **Wells and Mendip Astronomers**

Tuesday 29 January at 7.30pm – "UK Re-wilding and Conservation Tales" Nick Upton has worked as a university biologist, a film-maker with David Attenborough at the BBC, a writer and a photographer. He has followed UK reintroduction projects such as the Great Crane Project (Somerset), reintroduction of Harvest mice to the Midlands, the Return of Beavers to Devon and Pine Martens to Wales, as well as surveys of Hazel dormouse (In Somerset), Suburban Hedgehog and Swift conservation (Wiltshire). He will tell stories of his varied work and about the concept of 're-wilding' as a conservation strategy. **Somerset Wildlife Trust**

Saturday 2 February at 2pm – "Why Birdwatching in Somerset?" a talk by Brian Roberts-Wray. **Wells Natural History & Archaeological Society**

Saturday 9 February 2019 at 12.00 - Music by David Heyes, Simón García, Bernard Salles, P Kellach Waddle, Bertram Turetzky & Teppo Hauta-aho

Wednesday 13 February at 7.30pm – “**The Impact of Community Radio**” a talk by Allan Trinder & Joanne Schofield, GFM. **Wells Civic Society**

Tuesday 26 February at 7.30pm – “**What is the Future of the Mendips Hills AONB?**”

Jim Hardcastle is the Manager of the Mendip Hills AONB. He will be looking at the current research that shows the state of the AONB what the future holds for this outstandingly beautiful and nationally protected landscape. What could the current government review of National Parks and AONBs mean for the area? He'll explore the issues and see if it's all bad news. **Somerset Wildlife Trust**

Friday 1 March at 7.30pm - “**Recent excavations at the Court House, Westbury sub Mendip**”. A talk by Pete Missingham. **Wells Natural History & Archaeological Society**

HEARING SUPPORT SYSTEM

Our new Hearing loop, funded by Awards for All, has now been installed and is proving to be extremely beneficial to groups hiring our Lecture Hall

BELIEVE IN SOMERSET



The museum was pleased to end 2018 by winning the 'Believe in Somerset' award for its Contribution to Tourism.

The award, which was sponsored by Care UK and the Trinity Mirror group, recognised the part played by the museum, along with the Tourist Information Centre (which is housed in the museum), in the promotion of Wells as a tourist destination.

The award is proudly displayed in the museum reception area.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The museum recognises the importance of social media as a way of letting people know what we do. Wherever you are in the world you can find out about our events and activities, follow us, and even participate.

The museum now has Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts. They differ in style and content, and we can use them for different purposes. You can find them either by clicking on the links on our website, or at:-



#wells.museum



www.facebook.com/wellsandmendipmuseum



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